

CHICAGO, ILL.
SUN-TIMES

M. 538,780
S. 661,622

APR 3 1966

Sukarno Downfall Traced To Pro-Red Revolt Flop

By Thomas B. Ross
Sun-Times Bureau

WASHINGTON — Evidence is mounting here that President Sukarno collaborated with the pro-Communist revolt in Indonesia last fall and thereby did himself in.

Ironically, it was Sukarno's obsession that the United States was plotting his overthrow that persuaded him he had to move against the army before it moved against him.

According to reliable intelligence sources, former Foreign Minister Subandrio and leaders of the Indonesian Communist Party convinced Sukarno last September that the army was conspiring with the Central Intelligence Agency for his downfall.

Sukarno, then in firm control but now only a figurehead, was highly susceptible to the pro-Communist pleadings, largely because of his awareness of the CIA's role in an unsuccessful revolt against him in 1958.

At that time, Allen L. Pope, an American pilot under contract with the CIA, was shot down and captured on a bombing run for the pro-Moslem rebels.

Persistent Suspicions

Pope was released in 1962 on the personal intervention of Robert F. Kennedy, brother of the late President John F. Kennedy, without ever admitting his CIA connections.

But the incident confirmed Sukarno in a conviction that the United States was determined to depose him. And despite repeated personal promises by the highest U.S. officials, he refused to believe that he had been granted immunity.

Accordingly, the sources here report, when he detected unusual signs of restiveness in the

military last summer, he was prepared to go along with the pro-Communist revolt, ostensibly against him but, in fact against the army high command.

The rebels, comprising three army battalions, struck on Sept. 30. They were led by Lt. Col. Untung, a battalion commander in Sukarno's personal bodyguard.

The rebels claimed they were acting to head off a coup against Sukarno planned for Oct. 5 by a council of generals "sponsored" by the CIA.

The revolt was put down by army units loyal to the high command within a few days. Sukarno was not publicly implicated but was forced to relinquish his absolute control, even though he remained president.

A Reach For Power

As anti-Communist reprisals mounted throughout the country (as many as 300,000 persons may have been killed) Sukarno moved to regain his power.

He had long relied upon the Communist Party, largest in Indonesia, to balance off the military and apparently felt its complete destruction would destroy whatever hope he had of recapturing his former dominant position.

Early this year it appeared he was on the way to success, largely because of the well-nigh mystical appeal he holds for the Indonesian people as father of his country.

However, he overplayed his hand in February by dismissing Gen. Abdul Haris Nasution, defense minister and head of the armed forces, and the army struck back last month.

Again Sukarno was forced to relinquish all government powers and return to a figurehead role, this time apparently for good.